

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

NOVEMBER 2011

FOUR DOLLARS



Sport'n Dogs • A Conservation Milestone • Short Hills WMA

NOVEMBER



BER 2011 CONTENTS



5 The Migratory Bird Treaty Act: Its Origins and Impacts

by Beth Hester

Many view the passage of this historic legislation as a catalyst of the modern conservation movement.

10 Hunting Through History

by Joe Byers

An accomplished deer hunter makes the case for more inclusive recruitment of the next generation of outdoorsmen.



14 A Paradise That Pays For Itself

by William H. Funk

Preservation of a hunting camp in Bath County has been assured through the use of a conservation easement.

18 Sport'n Dogs Go Global

by Clarke C. Jones

If you are looking for a new four-legged hunting partner, you might want to expand your thinking.



22 Living With Wildlife

by Cristina Santiestevan

There are many ways we can accommodate the needs of wildlife in order to successfully coexist.

27 Short Hills WMA: Where Habitat Diversity Rules

by Bruce Ingram

One of Virginia's most recently designated wildlife management areas has something to offer just about everyone.

30 AFIELD AND AFLOAT

32 Off the Leash • 33 Photo Tips • 34 Dining In

ABOUT THE COVER: Whitetail buck. Story on page 10. © John R. Ford



BOB DUNCAN
Executive Director



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Birds, and their remarkable ability to fly, have inspired mankind from time immemorial. It was a concern for the future of these wonderfully adapted creatures that resulted in one of this country's greatest milestones in conservation history: passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918. This act recognized the critical need to halt the indiscriminate market hunting of migratory birds and, at the same time, reinforced the Public Trust Doctrine of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This one act recognized that migratory wild fowl are indeed an international resource and must be managed accordingly. I think you will enjoy the article on page 5 about this historic legislation.

We all have our own, unique connections to wildlife. I recall as a young bowhunter afield in Southwest Virginia I was curious about how loggerhead strikes would impale their prey on the thorns of Hawthorne bushes. I marveled at a migration wave of bullbats (nighthawks) in the New River Valley extending for several miles, and the recollection fills me with the same sense of wonder as the large number of purple martins that stage annually at the Farmers Market in Richmond. Similarly, I remember working in the mid-grass prairies in Kansas in the mid-1970s and first hearing, and then seeing, thousands of sandhill cranes bugling and migrating from their staging area on the Platte River. I recall seeing my first tundra swans, then called whistling swans, at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in the late 1970s. I also fondly remember in 1987 taking my eldest daughter, just four years old at the time, with me to see the first successful brown pelican nests in Virginia of recent history.

In my professional life I have had the good fortune to capture and band wild fowl in three of the four flyways. Of those many wonderful experiences, my favorite—and one that I continue to enjoy—is using an airboat at night to capture wood ducks during late summer and early fall. For the record, I don't drive airboats; more correctly, my very capable staff have me down as the designated non-driver. That chore is much too critical to our safety and the successful capture of wood ducks to be left with me. The object of these night-time capture operations is to allow us to band home-grown wood ducks in order to obtain management data on their survival, movements, and productivity. Those data in turn play into the discussions with flyway biologists on setting season frameworks.

The actual act of capture can best be described as trying to catch a small, elusive duck with a lacrosse stick-sized net while underway in a fast-moving airboat on a moonless night and a high tide. Let the games begin! In addition to actually catching wood ducks, the most amazing thing about these operations is the diversity of wildlife observed—including everything from sora rails, egrets, herons, bitterns, beavers, muskrats, snapping turtles, frogs, and lots of unknown species of fish moving too quickly through the thick underwater vegetation to be identified. But I digress.

As this issue reaches you, hunting seasons are well underway. Folks have already been afield enjoying dove, goose, and teal seasons, along with archery season and the special Youth Deer Hunting Day. I love the month of November for all of these opportunities and for my favorite holiday, Thanksgiving. I hope everyone will consider how blessed we are and that you will take time with your families and friends to enjoy this special season. I trust you will also enjoy the line-up of stories inside when you are not out there, creating your own outdoor connections and wildlife memories!

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The Migratory Bird
Treaty Act:

ITS ORIGINS
and IMPACTS

Roseate Tern
©Spike Knuth

by Beth Hester

"Unless and except as permitted by regulations made as hereinafter provided in this subchapter, it shall be unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess, transport... any migratory bird, any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, or any product, whether or not manufactured, which consists, or is composed in whole or part, of any such bird or any part, nest, or egg thereof..."

—(16U.S.C. 703-712)

The MBTA: Confusion and Good Intentions

Earlier this year, a good-hearted 11-year-old Fredericksburg girl 'rescued' a baby woodpecker from a perceived threat: a cat lurking in the backyard. Not wanting to leave the bird alone and unwilling to leave the bird in a hot vehicle, the girl, with caged bird in tow, entered a local hardware outlet where the woodpecker was spotted by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) officer who happened to be in the store. As illegal possession of a bird may potentially violate the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the officer initiated an inquiry. Upon speaking with the family at a later date, the officer determined that no further action was needed, because the girl had since released the bird back into the wild and was operating as a Good Samaritan. Unfortunately, a glitch in the automated FWS computer system failed to cancel the previously issued, pre-investigation citation, and the girl's mother received the errant citation in the mail along with a fine of 535 dollars. The resulting news story went viral. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries was not a part of this investigation.

The FWS apologized to the dazed family for the error, acknowledging the girl's good intentions. But by this time, the blogosphere was jumping with posts from anti-

government conspiracy theorists claiming that the MBTA and attendant enforcement efforts constituted an unwarranted 'Big Government' intrusion into everyday life. Though experienced wildlife rehabilitators and other skilled outdoor professionals attempted to modulate the discussions in various media outlets by means of MBTA apologetics, it was becoming clear that lack of context, and an ignorance of the law and its origins, was fomenting a mixture of indignation and confusion. Given the breadth of recent media attention and widespread misunderstanding, it is useful to revisit the history of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and explore its application in today's environment.

The Backstory: Fashion Trade, Market Hunting, and Specimen Collecting Devastate Bird Populations

Around the turn of the century, and before the MBTA was enacted in 1918, being 'fashion-forward' meant wearing hats accented by exotic bird feathers. Postcards from the era, along with covers of popular magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post*, show women sporting ostrich and egret-plumed hats, jaunty caps trimmed with heron feathers, and weird millinery concoctions topped with the bodies of entire birds. According to research by ornithologist Frank Chapman, 40 varieties of native birds or bird parts adorned approximately three-quarters of the 700 women's hats he'd observed in New York City alone. Millinery houses in Europe and America participated in an international bird and bird feather trade to meet the demand. Populations of white egret, heron, trumpeter swan and roseate tern were being devastated. Hunters would actively seek out remote, large rookeries where the take would be the greatest, cruelly removing the bird's breeding plumes. The indiscriminant slaughter of these birds often left considerable numbers of young offspring to starve, causing populations to further deteriorate. According to the Audubon Society, the feather trade killed some 200 million wild birds per year.





Another cause of avian decline was the practice of market gunning, widespread in waterfowl-rich regions across the Atlantic Flyway, including the Chesapeake Bay and Currituck Sound. At the turn of the century, wild game was becoming a popular item on the menus of upscale restaurants and resort hotels, and market gunners and their middlemen worked effi-

ciently to satisfy the new tastes of emerging markets. So efficiently, it turns out, that market gunners using sink boxes, huge deck-mounted punt guns, live decoys, sneak boats, and baits could kill massive amounts of waterfowl in a very short period of time. Many conscientious sportsmen and guides whose livelihoods depended upon providing good hunts for their paying clients condemned the practices.

Interestingly, during the same period that the hunting of game birds was largely unregulated and bobolinks were being served in restaurants, there was a corresponding up-tick of interest in natural history and bird watching. Eager nature hobbyists collected specimens for study and, peripherally, for home décor. For many fashionable late-Victorians, Edwardians, and Gilded Agers, this literally meant bringing the outdoors inside. Literature of the period frequently describes interiors where varieties of stuffed birds and collections of nests, feathers, and eggs are exhibited in bell jars or in diorama-like display cases right alongside the potted plants. This widespread collecting added to the

bird body count, but the growing interest in new scientific discoveries and natural history had the collateral effect of encouraging emerging pockets of concerned bird watchers and ornithologists to begin to form the basis for what would become a modern, fully-fledged conservation movement.

Cooperative Efforts and Concerned Citizens Organize

Early efforts at bird conservation were truly grassroots. For example, in 1896, years after George Grinnell's unsuccessful attempt at organizing the first Audubon Society chapter, a determined Harriet Hemenway persuaded her influential, high-society friends to, well, stop wearing birds on their heads. Eventually, Harriet and her cadre of Boston bird advocates founded the Massachusetts Audubon

Society. As other chapters organized, they banded together, pushing states to regulate market hunting and to stop practices that were pushing more and more birds to the edge of extinction. Society women held fundraising, bird-consciousness-raising informational teas and they tirelessly circulated petitions. These tea parties were early conservationist versions of social media, and with the aid of auxiliary publications, word about bird conservation began to spread. Eventually, editorial content in fashion magazines like *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, and *Ladies Home Journal* reflected this new discussion.

New Laws Help Safeguard Bird Populations

One of the earliest pieces of legislation resulting from the coalescing interests of educated ladies-who-lunch, amateur naturalists, birders,



Blue Heron
©Spike Knuth

scientists, and ethical sportsmen was *The Lacey Act of 1900*. The act helped to protect game and wild birds by making it a federal crime to poach game in one state with the intent to sell it in another. The law also was concerned with the potential for exotic and non-native species of animals to be introduced into native populations, overtake them, and introduce disease.

Following on the heels of *The Lacey Act* was the *Weeks-McLean Law*, which in 1913 placed migratory birds under federal jurisdiction, prohibiting their killing without federal authorization. There followed various state and federal court rulings to strike down

Weeks-McLean, but in 1916 the Wilson Administration negotiated a treaty on behalf of Canada via Great Britain—an agreement which would lay the groundwork for what would, in 1918, become *The Migratory Bird Treaty Act*.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Gains Traction

The MBTA implemented the 1916 agreement between the United States and Great Britain to protect birds migrating between

the U.S. and Canada. Migratory birds don't observe border crossings or turn back at checkpoints, so as conservation efforts evolved and political climates became amenable to discussion, other conventions between the U.S. and Mexico (1936), Japan (1972), and the U.S.S.R. (Russia, 1976) were incorporated. Currently, the MBTA establishes federal protection over approximately 836 bird species, some 58 of which are legally hunted as game birds during designated seasons, with bag limits regulating harvest.

Some species not covered by the MBTA are covered by The Endangered Species Act, or other federal and state laws which are at least as restrictive. While broader aspects of the MBTA are easily understood, such as not killing songbirds, disturbing eggs, or relocating or removing osprey nests without a special purpose permit, other facets of the act are surprising, and harder to interpret, such as whether or not it's legal to remove a baby bird to save it from a marauding cat in your backyard. While researching this piece, I came across countless examples of people seeking clarity on a variety of murky, bird-related moral dilemmas. Here is a sampling of questions, and the correct answers:

- ◆ "My mom's afraid her new chihuahua will be snatched from our yard by circling hawks. What do we do?" Keep the dog in the house, or get a bigger dog.
- ◆ "Can I pick up found game bird feathers to use in my fly tying / dream catcher crafting / quill pen making?" You can, but you probably shouldn't. If the authorities find the feathers in your possession out of season, how would they know how you obtained them? Of course, using feathers from legally hunted and thus legally possessed game birds is fine.
- ◆ "Is it illegal for me to bring in blue jay feathers for show-and-tell?" Yes. Although it seems unreasonable to some, unless specifically allowed under the terms of a salvage or other permit, it is illegal to collect bird feathers or nests.
- ◆ "A woodpecker is punching holes in my siding. Can I get rid of it?" There are harmless, simple ways to discourage this unwanted activity. Check with your local Cooperative Extension Service agent.



Bobolink
©Spike Knuth

◆ “Canada geese are harming my crops!”

Check with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries or the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture’s wildlife program for information on current laws and available ‘coping’ mechanisms.

- ◆ “I found a baby bird hopping on the ground. I think it’s abandoned or injured. Can I bring it in the house to keep it safe and nurture it back to health?” It is best to curb the impulse to ‘rescue’ birds. Though well intended, you may end up doing more harm than good. In most cases the baby birds are finding their way in their new surroundings and are being watched by a parent. If a bird is actually crippled or needs assistance, contact www.wildliferehabinfo.org or your veterinarian for guidance on what to do until a legally certified wildlife rehabilitator can take possession of the bird.

Evolving Laws and Regulations

Changing circumstances can create the need to re-evaluate our conservation laws. For example, *The Lacey Act of 1900* has been amended many times, and now it includes provisions for plants and mammals and is concerned with the effects of commercial logging on wildlife. Limited flexibility has been created to handle osprey nests and Canada geese in certain narrow circumstances, and in August of this year the Audubon Society met to re-examine the MBTA’s effectiveness, as migratory birds face increasing environmental stress.

The provisions of MBTA impact individuals, corporations, and industry. Enforcement is strict, and penalties for violating the law can be severe. It may seem petty or intrusive to make it illegal to gather bird feathers during an autumn hike in the woods; it may seem heartless to restrict well-meaning, but

un-trained citizens from ‘rescuing’ baby birds; it may be a temporary pain in the keester to have to consult with wildlife officials or biologists about the mourning dove that is nesting in your construction equipment; and... it may seem like ‘Big Brother’ is restricting your right to do whatever you want to any animal that comes onto your property. But the fact is, strict enforcement of the MBTA and other bird conservation laws protecting both game and non-game species has substantially curbed declining population numbers and many birds, such as the great blue heron, have rebounded since the early 20th century.

The MBTA hasn’t prevented women from wearing ugly hats; children will always want to pick up pretty feathers; and some people will simply do whatever they want when they think no one is looking. But these persnickety laws, as some have called them, serve a greater purpose. The smaller details of the MBTA help to support its overall mission, to further a diverse, healthy ecosystem.

So as they say: When in doubt, observe but don’t touch... look, but don’t collect. ✎

Beth Hester is a writer and freelance photographer from Portsmouth. Her passions include reading, shooting, kayaking, fishing, tying saltwater flies, and tending her herb garden.



Great Egret

©Spike Knuth





Courtesy of Bub Jackson

Left, James Jackson Sr., (L) with hunting buddies in 1951. Below, members of the Longhorn Hunting Club of James City County gather in 1952. Included here are James Jackson Sr. and Bub's uncle, George Jackson, both still living. Right, Bub Jackson with one of his full mounts.



Courtesy of Bub Jackson

Hunting Th

*James "Bub" Jackson
entertains thousands
with his
Virginia Whitetail
Collection,
an extension of
family heritage and
an inclusion call
to future generations.*

by Joe Byers

"My mom would drop me off at dawn by the edge of the woods and give me 20 cents because I never knew where I'd end up," recalls Williamsburg resident "Bub" Jackson, reflecting back to his youth. "At the end of the day, I'd scout out a pay phone and then mom would come get me."

The Williamsburg area draws millions of visitors annually seeking its historic treasures and abundant entertainment venues; yet the

Jackson family has enjoyed excellent hunting on the outskirts of the historic city, a tradition that Bub extends to his children and grandchildren today.

"I used to have 3,600 acres to roam as a young man, but it's only ten percent of what it once was," he laments. "Still, I have great success, sometimes in unlikely places."

One of the most recent additions to his Virginia Whitetail Collection stemmed from a chance encounter while driving through the outskirts of Williamsburg.

"I was driving slowly, looking for a friend, when a lady called to me from the curb."



Through History

"Hey!" she said loudly. "Are you a hunter?"

"Why, yes I am," Jackson replied, remembering that he was wearing a camouflage shirt.

"Come here for a moment," continued the lady, a hint of desperation in her voice. "There's a big buck coming through my backyard and I'm afraid it will attack my grandkids."

"I'll have to use a crossbow in the city limits," explained Jackson.

"I don't care what you use," she continued. "It looks like it's going to charge."

Challenging the Family Tradition

Bub Jackson was born in New Kent County and became enthralled with hunting at the knee of his father and other family members. "My dad and uncle talked about hunting all the time and I was fascinated with the stories they told," he remembers. "Everyone had hunting and fishing stories, and the one that got away was always the biggest."

Bub and his brothers each received BB guns at an early age and learned to shoot and

hunt by chasing sparrows and starlings. That progressed to a .22 rifle and food species like squirrels and rabbits. "If dad had to keep the boys, he'd take us hunting so that he could enjoy himself too. He also taught us hunting and general gun safety."

Bub often hunted before and after high school, to the point that he got burned out as the outdoors had to compete with sports and girls. "You didn't have the gear and clothing you have today," he explains. "No camouflage, just brown or green colors, and you wore five pairs of socks and three pairs of jeans to keep warm. I was cold all the time."



After high school, Jackson entered the Army where he became proficient with a rifle and began developing his independent style. Returning home, he put his newly learned shooting skills to work and quickly became an effective hunter. "My dad, uncle, and their friends hunted deer with hounds, carrying on the traditional British traditions," says Jackson. "I quickly learned that the old-timers kept the best deer stands a secret and used us younger guys to move deer and harvest does. Using dad's 30-06, I began perfecting the skills of still hunting, read every book and magazine I could find on the subject, and soon took much bigger bucks than the dog hunters."

The Virginia Whitetail Collection

In the next few years, Jackson's hunting success mushroomed, such that he attended large hunting shows where the big names in hunting were selling products and promoting their video tapes. He took deer in Williamsburg as big as or bigger than any of the game they were displaying and dreamed of a way to earn a living from his hunting prowess.

In the early 1990s, video tapes about hunting became a profitable business and Jackson believed his experiences would be of interest to the hunting public. However, most professional hunters had film crews to capture



Bub Jackson's video has been a big hit at trade shows and will soon be available on DVD. Contact Bub at (757) 869-0228 for information.

their exploits—an expense well beyond the means of an Anheuser-Busch employee. Up to the challenge, Jackson experimented by filming himself. It is a practice he continues to this day. By using a very sturdy swing arm in a tree stand, he captured a number of authentic hunting harvests.

“A lot of times the deer got away, but I had to be patient and get the whole process on tape,” Jackson says. “Each time you go, you try to do it better, and after years of experimentation I perfected the practice.”

Long before websites and electronic media, Jackson realized that he needed to step apart from the rest of the hunting world and had an idea. What if he made full mounts of the many game animals that he and his family harvested in the Williamsburg area? Although shoulder mounts were common among hunters, few captured realistic presentations of game animals.

Jackson began exhibiting his collection and soon had a lengthy list of paid invitations to regional sporting shows to display his many mounts and talk with patrons about his techniques and tactics. Although the quality of the game animals was impressive, few could imagine they came from Williamsburg, Virginia. As Jackson’s skills developed, the collection grew impressively.

Change for Better or Worse?

Jackson has seen hunting change in some aspects, yet not in others. “Nature-wise, I think global warming has changed hunting a lot,” he says, basing that assertion on his observations. “I’ve not seen a rut in traditional style, such as big bucks chasing does, in the last five years. Normally I took my best deer during the first week of November when the muzzle-loading season opens. Now, I’m seeing the biggest deer move during the first two weeks of October in the archery season. It seems like the rut is three weeks sooner.”

Advances in gear and clothing have made a huge difference as well. “I now plant food plots and use motion-sensor, trail cameras to identify and scout for deer,” says Jackson, attributing one of his recent big deer to the imaging trend. “I had photos of three bucks that passed through a fence opening regularly in September. A week before the archery season opened, I deployed a blind near that crossing and expected to score the first morning. The bucks didn’t show until evening, and I passed two easy shots at nice



Bub Jackson with his extensive Big Game Collection at a trade show.

bucks because I knew that a third and largest buck stayed with the group. Several minutes after the first two animals passed, the real trophy came along.”

Jackson believes the multi-billion-dollar hunting industry has embraced new technology in clothing and hunting gear, yet has not opened its arms to diversity among its participants. “As an African American, I don’t believe the hunting industry has done anything to broaden itself to minority markets,” he says. “Deer are color blind, why isn’t the hunting industry?”

A decade ago, as hunting shows became more popular on television, industry leaders took steps to see that those productions depicted ethnically appropriate themes. “Shows progressed far beyond the single male hunter, embracing women, kids, the handicapped, and veterans,” Jackson says. “I don’t want to sound bitter, but I hope to send a message to the industry. I see a lot of hunters with disabled veterans; yet, they are primarily white. And I know from being in the military, we’ve always been on the front lines.”

Play it Forward

Jackson worries about future minority generations and their involvement in the outdoors. “No one is a more ardent proponent of hunting than I am; yet I have a hard time getting my kids and grandkids fired up about hunting. They don’t have the drive because they

don’t see kids of color on TV. A huge segment of the next generation is being overlooked. Hunting shows are all white, with few if any Blacks, Asians, or Hispanics. It’s not about me, but the industry needs to attempt to make the outdoors bigger and better for everyone.

“I have a brother, a cousin, and several friends who are ardent golfers and play regularly, even though they weren’t raised on the sport. That’s not the influence of Jack Nicholas, but Tiger Woods,” Jackson says. “In this way, I hope that the Virginia Whitetail Collection is an inspiration to all hunters, but minorities in particular. The emphasis needs to be on getting *all* children into the outdoors.

“Right now, I have four generations of hunters: my dad, son, daughter, and grandchildren. My dad is 84 and still drives to Kansas and Alabama to bow hunt. He inspired me and introduced me to a world of natural recreation, and I hope to pass that excitement and dedication on to future generations of young people, regardless of color. My goal is to keep growing and exhibiting the collection in the hopes that the Internet and TV industry will soon get the message.”

Award-winning author and photographer Joe Byers of Hagerstown, Md. has more than 1000 articles in print, derived from a passion for the outdoors. Check www.huntingwithjoebyers.com.



A Paradise That Pays

Courtesy of Taylor Cole

by William H. Funk

*T*he natural and rural landscapes of Virginia have been celebrated in painting, poetry, and song for over four hundred years. Over the long millennia prior to English settlement the land had abundantly provided its inhabitants with the resources necessary for life, from a Chesapeake Bay once so full of fish it was difficult to navigate, to the western mountains teeming with deer, bear, and wild turkey. The ritualized hunting practiced by the natives was replaced by the wholesale conversion of forested habitat into farmland as Europeans moved farther inland. Native species such as elk, woodland bison, and mountain lion were soon eradicated with the conversion of old-growth forest to small farms and fragmented, successional woodlands.

Even so, the past 40 years have brought a

resurgence of those game species able to survive in the patchy, isolated habitat we've left standing. Deer are abundant throughout Virginia—some regions are in fact overpopulated in the face of extinct predators and diminished human hunting. Bear and turkey populations are also expanding where habitat permits, bears being dependent upon sizeable contiguous areas of roadless acreage and largely confined to the environs of protected parks and forests.

Not all is rosy with native game species, however: The ruffed grouse continues its long slow withdrawal from the mountain forests it has graced for eons. With a stubborn decline of over three percent annually, it is clear to state biologists that sufficient habitat is not being retained to support this species in healthy, expanding populations. In even worse condition is the bobwhite quail, the silencing of whose cheerful cry on Virginia farms is sadly the case throughout its range, a

victim of widespread monocultural farming, biocides, and feral cat predation.

Throughout today's rapidly changing commonwealth we see escalating devastation of historic landscapes of forest and farmland. Residential and commercial development continue to creep southward, devouring thousands of acres of open space with commuter subdivisions, strip malls, and roaring highways. The physical character of Virginia is fast becoming indistinguishable from the overdeveloped regions to our north, and many of our rural landowners are anxiously seeking a means of assurance that their family farms will remain free and open for the coming generations.

The coldwater currents and brooding forests of Bath County may seem a safe distance away from the urbanizing chaos of our less fortunate regions, but even here there are increasingly visible signs of the development fever that is infecting the lower Shenandoah

for Itself



Courtesy of Taylor Cole

Valley. Second homes and vacation cabins are springing up as word of Bath's outstanding beauty is spread, and large-scale development remains a constant threat. According to their 2007–2012 Comprehensive Plan, Bath residents included the following in what they valued most about their county: "wide open spaces; healthy air; no huge 'superstores'; very few housing developments;" and "hunting." In other words, Bath residents seek to keep things largely as they are, and don't wish to replicate the soulless development patterns that have robbed so much of Virginia of its natural beauty.

These very hopes and concerns are what persuaded Lance Lyons to place a conservation easement on his family's historic Bath County property, a 2,500 acre for-profit hunting camp adjoining the George Washington National Forest called Green Valley Hunter's Paradise. Lying south of the Deerfield Valley between Millboro and

Williamsville, the managed hunting camp provides bow, black powder, rifle, and shotgun hunts for deer, turkey, and upland birds such as quail, grouse, and pheasant. Guided fishing trips for riverside trout and Lake Moomaw bass are available, as are boating, hiking, mountain biking, and bountiful wildlife watching. The Stuarts Run Conservation Site, nearly 200 acres of shale barrens recognized by the state's Division of Natural Heritage as harboring endangered plant species, is also protected by the easement.

The property offers cabins, catered meals, and 50 miles of hiking trails winding through the magnificent Allegheny countryside to provide urbanites with a means of temporary mental refuge. The reasonable fees the owners charge for these sporting experiences—along with the tax benefits associated with their donation of a conservation easement—are what have allowed the family to retain this handsome property intact and undeveloped.



Pictured here, Laura Lyons with her grandson Luke (L) and son Lance (R).



Eugene Hester

Why pay someone to go hunting, that most independent and American of activities? In days not so distant past most anyone who lived in the country could easily find private property to hunt on—all it took was a knock on the door and a polite request. But in recent years things have changed dramatically, and hunting opportunities on private lands are rapidly constricting. One obvious reason for the increasing difficulty with which hunters are able to locate an agreeable landowner is the unfortunate legacy of prior visitors who failed to live up to the standards of sportsmanship: spent shells, gut piles, opened gates, and trampled crops have too often been the reward for a farmer's generosity.

An even more insidious problem is the continued erosion of viable wildlife habitat to hunt in. The future of hunting in the United States is dependent upon our securing and preserving adequate habitat to support game species and other wildlife. As most of the country's remaining habitat is in private hands, it is necessary for landowners who hope to keep their woods and fields alive and productive to act now to protect their landscapes after they've gone. Conservation easements provide a proven, permanent means of guaranteeing that hunting habitat will remain open and available to future hunters, their families and their friends, in perpetuity. And as the Lyons family has shown, protecting wildlife habitat can be not only personally rewarding but profitable, as well.

There are many misconceptions about conservation easements, including the stale chestnut that the donation of an easement somehow means that you're giving up land ownership. This is false, as are the persistent fables about property under easement somehow becoming worthless, or controlled by the government, or inalienable, or "locked up" and forever unusable. Tout au contraire ... what a conservation easement really does is provide landowners with a way to permanently protect the most valuable features of their property, which in the Lyons's case is hunting habitat and, perhaps of even greater value, deep family ties to the land. Easements permanently remove the threat of inappropriate or unwanted development and allow landowners and their descendants to enjoy the special features of their property over the long term while it remains commercially available, whether for farming, forestry, or hunting and fishing.

"This farm was built on blood, sweat, and tears," says Lance Lyons, "starting with my mom and dad and going on to my generation and now to my kids' generation. Holding onto family



land, especially large tracts of wooded mountain land, is something you don't see much these days, and putting it in easement helps us keep it available to sportsmen who might not have their own land to hunt and fish."

Lance's mother, Laura Lyons, has been instrumental in keeping the Green Valley Hunter's Paradise an ongoing and viable concern. With her husband, Lance's late father Marvin, Laura began assembling the tracts that comprise the family property in the 1960s, first as a private hunting club and since the early 1990s as a commercial enterprise. Lance has been actively managing the club's wildlife habitat for a quarter century, and now offers his years of experience as a consultant to other landowners seeking to maximize their property's hunting value. Lance's son Luke and daughter Grace are also expected to be involved in the family business in the years to come.

Careful attention to detail, from food plots and cornfields to stocked ponds and comfortable guest accommodations, has contributed to the preserve's lasting popularity. "We have all types of clientele," says Lance, "from locals to people from Maine, Florida, and all across the country. Sportsmen come here to relax and pursue their passions in the most beautiful outdoors setting imaginable." The pristine hunting environment is no accident: Controlled burns, carefully targeted logging, and streamside buffer retention are central features of the business's profitability.

The Lyons family believes that permanently protecting their land will further con-

tribute to their successful business model, and this is surely true—if only because less proactive landowners will one day face the development of their property by real estate speculators. Make no mistake: Privately-held open space that is not given full legal protection through a conservation easement will eventually be developed once your personal control over its fate is ended. It's simply inevitable.

These are tough times, for Bath residents and everyone else. Many rural landowners are concerned about their ability to retain family farms and other open spaces when there are so many bills to pay. As the preservation of farms, forests, wildlife habitat, and other open spaces is in the public interest, both federal and state governments offer economic rewards to easement donors. Virginia's generous tax credit system provides landowners without significant income tax burdens to actually sell their unusable credits to individuals and corporations for cash.

And while the easement donor relinquishes his right to turn his farm into a subdivision, title and all other private property rights—including the right to sell it, lease it, or pass it down to heirs—remain with the landowner, as does the right to use the land in any way that doesn't harm its recognized conservation values. In essence, what the easement donor is giving away is something he never wanted: the right to destroy those aspects of his land that mean the most to him.

"The easement program helps large

landowners without much available cash to retain their property," Lance says. "I'm worried that the General Assembly might do something to reduce the value of the tax credit program or end it completely, because land management is expensive, and selling our credits helped a lot in allowing us to preserve all the property."

"In fact," Lance continues, "the easement pretty much saved our farm from being sold piecemeal."

Lance Lyons says his family placed their hunting camp under easement to provide it with permanent protection, and that his donation experience demonstrated to him that land preservation and financial gain can be mutually compatible. "The best thing about donating our easement," he says, "is that the land hasn't changed at all. That's what I like—knowing that this wildlife habitat will be protected forever. As time goes on, it becomes more and more important to me."

If you want to keep things the way they are, and sleep easy knowing that your hard work in managing and maintaining your rural land will be retained as a legacy for the future, why not take advantage of sellable tax credits and the other benefits of easement donation? Enjoy the feeling of lasting contentment, knowing that your own special slice of paradise is forever out of harm's way. ❧

A member of the Virginia State Bar, a freelance environmental writer and filmmaker, William H. Funk has written previously about conservation issues and hunting for Virginia Wildlife.



Sport'n Dogs Go

*When
considering
a new dog for
waterfowl
or bird hunting,
look at your
full range
of options.*

story by Clarke C. Jones

*“W*ell, what do you think of her?” my friend asked as we stood in his driveway admiring his new luxury vehicle.

“Aren’t you the traditionalist who always says, ‘Buy American?’” I responded.

“You are right,” he replied somewhat sheepishly, “but the Cadillac and Lincoln just don’t have the same cachet they used to have. Besides, this car is made in America—it just didn’t *originate* in America.”

“When did you start using words like ‘cachet’ in a sentence?” I inquired.

“Ever since a French company agreed to

buy my construction business. Everyone has gone global now,” he countered. “Good or bad, things just aren’t the way they used to be.”

As I headed home in my less-than-luxurious pickup, I thought about what my friend said and how things have changed in this country, not just in car selection, but in so many other ways, including bird and waterfowl hunting. Loss of habitat has certainly played some role in the selection of dogs we use to hunt. But it is not the only factor.

It did not seem so long ago that a Labrador or Chesapeake retriever was the only dog you considered when hunting ducks and an English pointer or English setter was all you would want for bird hunting. About 25 years ago, I started to notice a few conti-



Left, Flat-Coated Retriever, and above, Vizsla. ©Dwight Dyke

Global

mental imports, like brittanys or the occasional German shorthaired pointer, in the field. Whether you shoot pheasant on a preserve or waterfowl in a marsh, it's worth looking at a few different hunting breeds that are now available but may not rise to the forefront of discussions when considering a bird dog.

The Flat-Coated Retriever

Let's start with a dog that many consider one of the best looking of all dog breeds, the flat-coated retriever. This longhaired, raven beauty could be the Elizabeth Taylor or Kim Kardashian of the dog world and looks very smart trotting around the show ring. However, the flat-coated retriever can perform in the field as well.

Hill Wellford, who lives on the Rappahannock River near Caret, says this about flatcoats: "My wife and I have owned both Labs and flat-coats over the years and both breeds have wonderful and loving dispositions. Our experience with flat-coats is they are relatively easy to train, absolutely love to hunt waterfowl and upland game, and have excellent noses. They are great at finding a cripple in a marsh and at trailing a bird that has crawled away," added Hill.

It is Wellford's opinion that flatcoats, though full of energy, are a little calmer than Labs in a duck blind. If you have ever been bowled over by an eager Chesapeake or Labrador while in the close confines of a duck blind, you know how important a quiet, calm retriever can be. Who should not own a flat-coat? Wellford cautioned, "Flat-coats are very energetic and require walks and daily exercise... I would not recommend them to a family that doesn't have the time to give them regular exercise opportunities."

The Vizsla

Imported from Hungary, the vizsla is a medium-built, short-coated and rust-colored pointing dog whose breed history goes back over 1,000 years. They are known to be clean, light-shedding dogs. The vizsla is considered a versatile hunting breed and it will hunt fur as well as feather. It put its stamp on the term *versatile* when it became the first dog breed to become an AKC Quintuple Champion, meaning that one vizsla won championships in five different categories.

I had the opportunity to watch Darin Strickland work his vizsla at Blandfield Plantation near Tappahannock, and—take it from me—this dog did not mess around. It can cover a lot of ground in a short period of time and seems to do so effortlessly and with style. Strickland has been hunting with vizslas for a dozen years now. According to Darin, not only are vizslas good hunting dogs, they are affectionate family dogs as well.

"Vizslas do not make good kennel-run dogs. They want to be with you in your house and near you. They are excellent pets for people with an active lifestyle." Darin advises those who may be interested in acquiring a vizsla: "If you intend to hunt, get your vizsla from known field stock. The best come from field trial stock. You will not find a well-bred vizsla waiting for you in the classifieds of your newspaper."

The Spinone Italiano

The Italians have been making firearms for over 400 years. They have been using hunting dogs for over 1,000 years and boast of two of the oldest hunting breeds in the world: the bracco and the spinone Italiano. The spinone (pron. spee-NO-nay) is a muscular, versatile hunting dog, often confused at first glance with German wirehaired pointers. Unlike the German wirehaired pointer, the spinone does not have an undercoat. They are a close-hunting dog, making them ideal for upland hunts. Breeder and hunter Ron Rosinski of Powhatan has hunted over spinoni (plural) since 1996 on grouse, woodcock, and pheasant. Although Ron has hunted over brittany's in the past, and believes them to be a close-working dog, it is his opinion the spinone is "more attuned to the hunter." The spinone also has the reputation of being a friendly and loyal family companion.

The Boykin Spaniel

The all-American boykin is the state dog of South Carolina, and compared to some breeds in this article, it is a relative newcomer to the hunting scene. This brown, or chocolate-colored, dog of medium height has a wavy outer coat of medium length as well as an undercoat. It can hunt most feathered game where any flushing dog is used. A number of Virginians have already discovered the flexibility of this breed. Carson Quarles, near Roanoke, believes the boykin to be a fine turkey dog, while Harriett Clark, from Sutherlin, field trials her boykins and believes they are excellent dogs when hunting pheasant. Other owners believe this 30- to 40-lb. canine is the perfect dog for duck hunting when in a boat. If you have ever tried to pull a 90-lb. Lab back into your jon-boat after it has made a retrieve, you can certainly appreciate having one of these little brown, dynamo boykins do the retrieving for you.



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©Trisha Jones

Top, Spinone, and above, Boykin.

The Deutsch Drahthaar

The Deutsh drahthaar (pron. dra-thar) originated in Germany and, like so many European hunting dogs, it was expected to hunt both fur and feather. In the U.S., however, a pointing dog that is sturdy enough for waterfowl hunting might be the answer to a wing-shooter's prayers.

"I was looking for a versatile hunting dog that I could take both upland and waterfowl hunting," said Ben Adamson of Richmond. "I've hunted upland game with flushing dogs and a number of them range so far out and often flush game before you are close enough for a good shot. This can be extremely frustrating—especially when grouse hunting," continued Adamson. Ben also believes the



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©Dwight Dyke



Drahthaar

Toller

drahthaar can be a good family dog that likes being around its owners.

Deutsch-drahthaar breeder Whit Johnston from Spout Spring points out that the drahthaar is bred through very strict guidelines. "To know you have a true drahthaar, inspect the underside of the dog's right ear for a green tattoo," cautioned Whit. "This green tattoo number is issued from Germany to the breeder after the breeder registers his or her puppies." According to Johnston, this is to guarantee that you are getting a puppy whose entire line comes from hunting stock.

"When you get the certification that your puppy is an actual deutsch-drahthaar, you are pretty much assured that both its parents have passed at least two versatile hunting tests, had their hips X-rayed and blood tested, and its teeth, eyes, coat, and confirmation are all within the breed standard," he added.

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever

This medium-sized, double coated dog loves to retrieve and is the smallest of the retriever class, though it does resemble a small golden retriever. It is far more active than a golden, however.

Hunter and full-time trainer Paul Kartes,

who has hunted over all types of retrievers, explains his desire to hunt over tollers. "I wanted a smaller retriever. While a toller can compete in a 200-yard retrieve, most of my 'real world' shots in hunting are rarely longer than 30 yards. The toller has a great nose, a desire to retrieve, and energy to spare, but it also knows when to turn it 'off' at home. The toller personality fits my type of hunting and my personality. They are not like Labs and goldens, where they are everybody's friend. They know who their family is and that is generally where they will seek attention. They are not mean or vicious to strangers but can be aloof to them."

Ed Callender, from Woodbridge, has been hunting with a toller for over seven years and wanted a smaller hunting companion. A male toller will run about 45–55 pounds, which works a lot better when hunting out of his 12-foot pirogue. According to Callender, tollers are highly adaptable but cautious, so if you plan to hunt them they will need access to water and open areas where they can train and get used to field conditions and be exposed to a wide variety of new environments.

"They need exercise and contact with people, so leaving them in a crate all day is not a good option. Tollers from hunting stock may be difficult to find, cautions Callender,

so do your research. "If you want a great hunting companion, a superb family dog that will make you laugh at least once a day, I recommend a toller," said Ed.



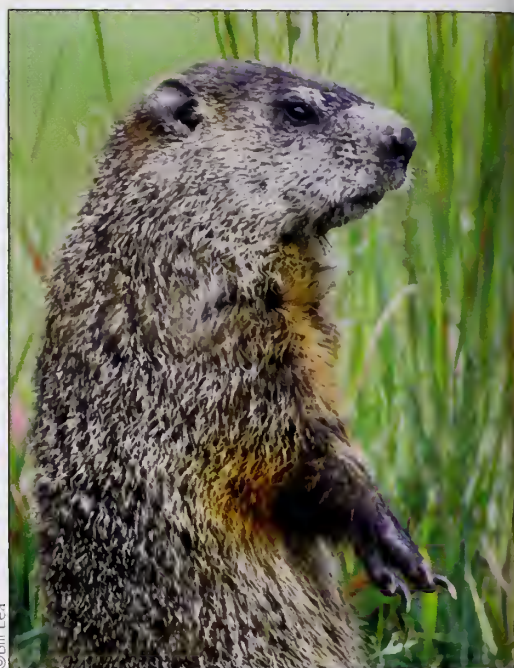
The reader should be mindful that this magazine is not endorsing any particular breed here and that a number of quotes come from breeders and owners who may have a natural bias toward the breed they own. Every dog breed comes with its own issues, and anyone interested in *any* breed should do his research before purchasing one. Most hunting breeds require daily or regular, vigorous exercise. Many breeds have their own organizations, which offer good resources for learning the specifics of a particular dog's character. Good breeders are particular about their breed of choice, and the last thing they want to see is a client buying a pup based on how cute it is and not making a knowledgeable selection. Too many dogs wind up with rescue organizations or in shelters because a new puppy owner didn't do his homework. ❖

Clarke C. Jones is a freelance writer who spends his spare time hunting up good stories with his black Lab, Luke. You can contact Clarke or Luke by going to their website at www.clarkecjones.com.

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Be Wild! Live Wild!
Grow Wild! 

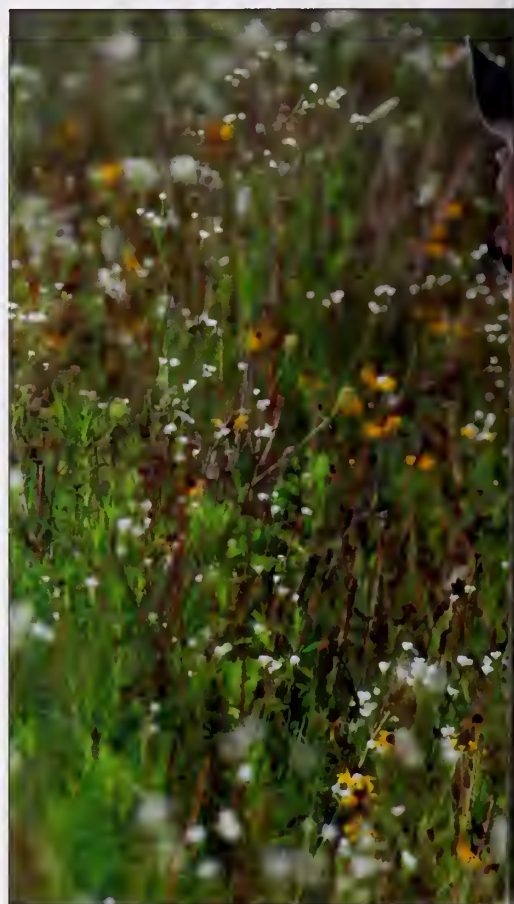
Living with

by Cristina Santiestevan

Whether it's a deer in the garden or a black bear in the trashcan, wildlife seems to have a way of making itself known, and sometimes in an entirely unwelcome manner. The invasions of these hungry animals are easier to understand, however, when we remind ourselves that the deer, bear, and raccoon were here long before our homes and towns existed. We are the interlopers, and it is our responsibility to find ways to coexist. This isn't difficult, and it is often fun.

According to the Department's bird specialist, biologist Sergio Harding, "The key is developing an improved understanding of and appreciation for wild animals through education. I encourage folks to learn what they can about their local wildlife, how their actions and decisions may positively or negatively impact those species, and the basic dos and don'ts of interacting with wildlife."

By providing wild animals with space of their own—while also protecting our trashcans and vegetable gardens—we increase the odds that our interactions with wildlife will be positive ones.





©Bill Lea

Wild animals need space to move about and take care of their needs. By giving them that space and limiting opportunities for them to become a nuisance—such as getting into trash (L)—humans and wildlife can continue to coexist.

Keeping the “Wild” in Wildlife

Wild animals don't distinguish between natural and artificial food sources. A bear is just as likely to forage from an unsecured trashcan as from a rotting tree stump. Likewise, a deer will readily eat both wild spicebush and cultivated peach trees. The animals don't recognize your ownership of that trashcan or peach tree. They are simply looking for their next meal.

Nothing works perfectly, but exclusion works the best. Simply don't give wild animals access to your garbage, your garden, or other temptations.

- ❖ If bears, raccoons or possums are invading your trashcans, store the filled cans in a secure garage or shed. If that's not possible, use chains or straps to secure the lid.
- ❖ Protecting gardens from hungry deer, rabbits, and groundhogs is more difficult. Deer will leap fences taller than six feet, and will also crawl under fencing material unless it's secured to the ground. Rabbits and groundhogs complicate matters by digging under fences. The best solution may be a combination of fencing and olfactory repellents, which are available at most hardware and gardening stores.
- ❖ Bird netting protects fruiting trees and shrubs from hungry birds and may also discourage squirrels and deer.
- ❖ Sound can also be used to keep wildlife away from gardens. Position a radio near your favorite plants, and set the dial to your station of choice. The human voices will warn animals to steer clear. But, be warned: Some animals will acclimate to sound more quickly than others. Slow this process by regularly moving the stereo or changing the station.

Here, a doe nurses a fawn that may later be left alone for hours. Avoid the temptation to interfere, as the mother is never far away.

Wildlife



©Bill Lea



Eugene Hester

Four Animals That Rarely Require Rescue

Fawns. Mother does often leave their fawns for hours at a time, relying on the fawn's natural camouflage to protect it from the hungry eyes of predators. These fawns haven't been abandoned—their mothers return regularly to feed them. When the fawns are older and stronger, they will join their mothers as they forage.

Baby rabbits. Like deer, female rabbits spend very little time with their young. This is not neglect. Instead, by staying away (except to feed the little ones), the mother rabbit is reducing the risk of predators discovering her babies. Unless the babies appear thin or weak, they are probably fine.

Young squirrels. Cute as can be, young squirrels don't look nearly tough enough to fend for themselves. But as long as they are moving without trouble, they are probably fine.

Fledgling birds. They seem so helpless—only partially feathered and often clumsy in flight and when perching. But, if the young bird is able to fly at all, then it should be fine. Its parents will watch and care for it until it learns to fend for itself.

Learn to Recognize When Wildlife Needs Help

Most “rescued” wild animals aren't really in need of rescue, and countless healthy animals are removed from the wild by well-intentioned people every year. However, there are always exceptions. According to DGIF veterinarian Megan Kirchgessner, the most common reasons for veterinary care include vehicle injuries, gunshot wounds, poisoning, and in the case of birds, collisions with windows.

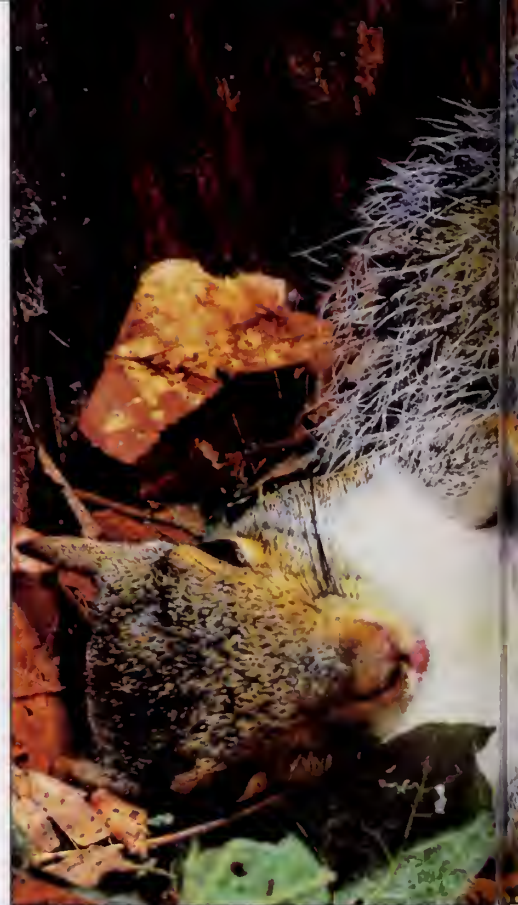
Help prevent injury by staying alert while driving, especially at dawn and dusk when wildlife are most active. Protect animals from accidental poisoning by carefully securing all chemicals. Antifreeze—which is extremely toxic—is especially attractive to animals, because it tastes sweet.

If you find a wild animal that does seem to require assistance, please do not touch or move it. Instead, follow these steps:

1. Observe the animal from a safe distance. Take note of its physical condition, state of awareness, and other signs of injury or illness.
2. Review the information provided on the Department's website and The Wildlife Center of Virginia website. This will help you determine if the animal really needs help.
3. If the animal is in need of assistance, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for guidance. A list of Virginia-licensed rehabilitators can be found on the DGIF website.

Some birds may require nothing more than a little momentary assistance; for example, a bird that is dazed after flying into a window may just need a quiet place to recuperate. Give the injured bird a spot that's safe from cats and other predators, and it may be just fine. Likewise, baby birds (those whose wings don't have feathers) can be returned to their nest without any trouble: It's a myth that adult birds will reject their chicks if they've been touched by humans.

Please note that it is illegal to keep wild animals without a permit. Any animal that requires actual care must be given to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Some species, such as state-threatened bald eagles and peregrine falcons, require specialized care and are taken to The Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro.



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Milkweed attracts many pollinators and butterflies, and is critical to the monarch caterpillar.



©Maslowski Photo

Left, a gray squirrel nurses her young.
Above, a bee feasts on goldenrod.



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Seven Wildlife-friendly Native Plants

Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). These long blooming and easy-care flowers attract native bees and happy swarms of butterflies, including monarch caterpillars which eat nothing else.

Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). This summer and fall bloomer bears large purple blooms, which attract native pollinators. The seed heads are irresistible to goldfinches.

Blazing star (*Liatrix scariosa*). The brilliant lavender-hued flower spikes are irresistible to gardeners and pollinators alike. Plant several of these in a clump for mid-summer color.

American elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *canadensis*). This shade-tolerant shrub bears beautiful white flowers, which are followed by large clusters of deep purple berries. The berries are edible, if you can convince the birds to share.

Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). As small to mid-sized trees, red cedars provide year-round shelter for wildlife (and privacy for gardeners). The blue berries attract flocks of hungry birds in the late summer and fall, including the cedar waxwing.

Rough-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*). Despite its reputation for causing hay fever (which is really caused by ragweed), goldenrod is actually an excellent choice for a splash of late-season color, nectar, and pollen in the garden.

Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*). Want to attract hummingbirds? Plant a sprawling clump of cardinal flower and wait for the bright red flowers to burst into bloom. It won't be long before the hummingbirds show up.

Find more suggestions for native plants on the DGIF website:

www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat/native-plants-for-wildlife.asp

Ruby-throated hummingbird on purple coneflower.



©John R. Ford

Give Wildlife its Own Space

While wildlife rarely needs to be rescued, it often does benefit from a little human help. In particular, homeowners and renters can readily assist local wildlife—from bumble bees and butterflies to foxes and owls—by maintaining a wildlife-friendly yard and landscape that provide food, water, and shelter. As additional land is developed for commercial and residential uses, these backyard oases become more and more important to our native wildlife species.

Looking to welcome a little more wildlife into your yard? Consider these additions:

- ❖ Native flowers supply ready nectar for pollinators, including monarch butterflies and ruby-throated hummingbirds.
- ❖ Native fruit-bearing and nut-bearing trees, shrubs, and brambles provide food for a wealth of wildlife, from box turtles to black bears.

- ❖ Birdfeeders provide supplemental food for wild birds. Providing high-quality seeds—black oil sunflower, thistle seed, white millet—ensures that birds are eating a healthy diet. Suet is also a good choice, especially in the winter. Be mindful, however, that depending on where you live, such bird feeders may attract other animals—squirrels, deer, and bears, in particular.
- ❖ Water is always welcomed, especially during Virginia's often dry summers. Add a small birdbath or a garden pond. Either will attract birds, mammals, and amphibians for a drink or a swim.
- ❖ Shelter is the final ingredient in a wildlife-friendly habitat. Dense shrubs provide birds with a safe place to build nests, while tall grasses and wildflowers offer shelter to cottontail rabbits, bobwhite quail, and red fox. 🦋

Cristina Santiestevan writes about wildlife and the environment from her home in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

RESOURCES

- ❖ Not sure if an animal requires assistance? Observe its behavior and review the information on the Department's website (www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured) and The Wildlife Center of Virginia's website (www.wildlifecenter.org/wp/rescue-advice).
- ❖ Find a sick or injured animal? Locate a Virginia-licensed wildlife rehabilitator online: www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators.asp.
- ❖ Interested in becoming licensed as a wildlife rehabilitator in Virginia? Begin by locating a licensed rehabilitator near you (link above) to discuss the training, time commitment, and costs associated with wildlife rehabilitation. Licensed rehabilitators can provide the education and support you will need when first starting out. You'll find additional information—including a list of classes—on The Wildlife Center of Virginia's website: www.wildlifecenter.org/wp/rehabilitator-training.
- ❖ Curious about starting your own Habitat at Home®? You'll find plenty of information on the DGIF website (www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat) and on the website for the Virginia Native Plant Society (www.vnps.org).
- ❖ Want to learn even more? Check out these books for advice on happily coexisting with wildlife:
 - *Kid's Easy to Create Wildlife Habitats*, by Emily Stetson.
 - *National Wildlife Federation Attracting Birds, Butterflies & Backyard Wildlife*, by David Mizejewski and Glee Barre.
 - *Noah's Garden*, by Sara Stein.
 - *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglas Tallamy.
 - *Rescuing Wildlife: A Guide to Helping Injured and Orphaned Animals*, by Peggy Sue Hentz.



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Above, purple finch on bird feeder.



Carol Heiser

Above, elderberry; below, cardinal flower.



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story and photos
by Bruce Ingram

Short Hills WMA: Where Habitat Diversity Rules

For conservation-minded outdoor enthusiasts, it's prudent to take the long view. Today, for example, we benefit from the actions of previous generations that had the foresight to establish such places in our state as the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the beginnings of the Old Dominion's wildlife management area system.

And no doubt future Virginians will praise the current generation for its wisdom in adding yet another public land to the fold—the 4,233-acre Short Hills Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The purchase is an inspirational story of cooperation among several key organizations that share the common goal of land conservation. The Wildlife Foundation of Virginia (WV) partnered with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), and The Conservation Fund to protect this land which straddles Rockbridge and Botetourt counties.

Jenny West, executive director of the WV, explains in brief how the WMA came into existence. “The Short Hills property had been identified by the Department as a high-priority public lands acquisition because of its unique wildlife and natural resources, rugged terrain, abundant game species, and highly visible and easily accessible location along I-81,” she says. “The Foundation acted as the private partner for DGIF in this transaction. Using a loan from The Conservation Fund, WV purchased the southern half of the property as an interim owner until DGIF could accumulate the necessary funds to purchase the property from WV.”

“The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, with funding from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, purchased the remainder on behalf of DGIF. At the final project closing, DGIF purchased WV's interest in the property using federal grant funds. VOF gifted their interest in Short Hills to DGIF, and the property is now wholly owned and managed by DGIF as the Short Hills WMA.”

This stream and its buffer zone offer much-needed habitat for a range of aquatic and terrestrial species.



Persimmon



Carolina Hemlock



Bear Oak

Touring Short Hills

About a year back, I accompanied regional wildlife manager Jay Jeffreys and then-board-member Sherry Crumley to tour the new WMA. On our way there, Crumley remarked that the location of this WMA is especially wonderful for sportsmen in the region, since they lost 39,000 acres of hunting lands several years ago when MeadWestvaco sold its properties. Jeffreys added that hunters, birders, hikers, and wildlife watchers will appreciate the diversity of wildlife found here.

Indeed, every stop the three of us made that day confirmed his statement. Our initial foray took us to a 100-acre field at the bottom of the property. Although the temperature was in the 90s, I heard and saw indigo buntings, goldfinches, cardinals, Eastern bluebirds, doves, field sparrows, and Carolina wrens, among others. Black walnuts, persimmons, and red cedars crowd that field.

"I can't wait until our staff can do some work on this field," noted Jeffreys. "We could employ some rotational mowing, thin some red cedars but leave others for thermal cover, plant some warm-season grasses, control the fescue and orchard grass, and do some prescribed burning to encourage wildflowers and a variety of forbs."

Jeffreys also emphasized that key historical structures in the field would be preserved; specifically, some hunt club buildings and a hand-laid stone bridge constructed as part of a small-gauge

railroad line.

Two access roads wind through Short Hills, and we took one to begin the long trek up the mountain. Several tributaries of the James and Maury rivers, most notably Cedar Creek, flow through the property. We paused at a small branch. Beech trees, shagbark and mockernut hickories, umbrella magnolias,

Trip Planning Information

DGIF Map: www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas
Short Hills is one of 39 state WMAs, which together total over 200,000 acres

The Conservation Fund:
www.conservationfund.org

Virginia Outdoors Foundation:
www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org

Wildlife Foundation of Virginia:
www.vawildlife.org

Botetourt County Tourism:
www.visitbotetourt.org; (540) 473-1167

Rockbridge Regional Tourism:
www.lexingtonvirginia.com;
(877) 453-9822

witch hazels, paw paws, basswoods, and Christmas ferns thrive along the stream. As soon as I debarked from the vehicle, I noticed the cooler air and heard scarlet tanagers, wood thrushes, and downy, pileated, and red-bellied woodpeckers.

"This rich, bottomland soil creates another kind of habitat," Jeffreys explained. "The first 100 yards on either side of a stream like this is where you will typically find the greatest diversity of woody and herbaceous plants in any area, and the Short Hills property is no exception. I bet bats would like roosting under the bark of those shagbark hickories."

A large portion of the land at Short Hills features upland habitat and, leaving the stream behind, we continued our drive up the mountain. Our next sojourn was an unplanned one, at a mid-level slope adjacent to a hardwood hollow.

"Is that a Carolina hemlock!" exclaimed Jeffreys as he abruptly stopped the vehicle.

We both examined the evergreen and concurred that it was indeed a Carolina hemlock, which is much less common than the Canadian hemlock. Nearby grew striped maples, another shade-loving tree that thrives in cooler micro-habitats. An Eastern wood peewee called out from the hollow as did a yellow-billed cuckoo. Scarlet oaks populate the cove here, and Crumley found an acorn that had already dropped.



Jay Jeffreys examines a hand-laid stone bridge constructed as part of a small-gauge railroad line.



A view from the top of the ridgeline that runs from just south of Lexington north to Natural Bridge.

We resumed our drive up the mountain on a very rough, rutted road and it was not long before we heard the hissing sound of a tire steadily deflating – apparently a victim of the terrain. But this unplanned stop on a dry, upland slope gave us the opportunity to observe yet another pocket of habitat, where chestnut oaks, red maples, poplars, and sassafras thrive, along with rattlesnake plantain, spotted jewelweed, and black cohosh.

At last we reached the peak of the property—at first glance a dry, desolate plateau with small trees and shrubs, but in reality, home to yet another set of wildlife species.

“What a great place to spot a black bear,” remarked Crumley, and Jeffreys agreed.

“Short Hills has a mountain range that continues for about 11 miles and this type of

long, unbroken mountaintop terrain is excellent habitat for black bears,” noted the biologist. “Plus, there’s lots of food up here for them.”

Surprisingly, the pinnacle of Short Hills does offer a cornucopia of food sources. Jeffreys pointed out some aptly-named bear oak trees laden with their tiny acorns. Crumley located some low-bush blueberries and, a few minutes later, the high-bush variety. The berries from both species are equally delicious. Naturally, the three of us took a break to uncover and enjoy the sweet treats.

The area also grows trees that provide food options preferred by bears: Allegheny chinquapins and black gums. Catawba rhododendron and mountain laurel thrive here as well, as do table mountain pines—all providing bedding areas for whitetails. Below us, we could hear Cedar Creek coursing down the mountainside, and along the road, two species that we noted in the bottomland field—mourning doves and towhees—seemed equally at home up top.

Our excursion down the mountain was uneventful except for an episode when I removed a box turtle from the road. In typical terrapin fashion, the creature was indifferent to my assistance and upon picking it up, the turtle simply retreated inside its shell.

I find it impossible, though, to be indifferent to the charms of the Short Hills Wildlife Management Area. I remarked to my companions that I plan on squirrel hunting here come fall.

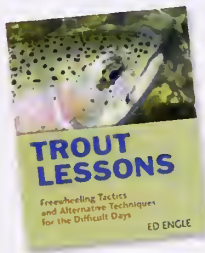
“Be our guest,” smiled Jeffreys. ☞

Bruce Ingram has written four books about river fishing. For more information, contact him at be_ingram@juno.com.



Highbush Blueberry

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—Editor, Stackpole Books

Even the most resourceful angler can get into a rut. When the going gets tough, instinctively clinging to favorite fly patterns and preconceived notions about how to fish a given body of water can hinder fishing success. But when the going gets tough, the tough get innovative, and noted author and fishing guide Ed Engle, who honed his fishing and fly tying techniques plying the diverse waters of the western United States, offers frequently overlooked or underutilized dry and wet fly strategies that can be incorporated into any angler's creel of tricks.

Engle invites readers to cast off complacency by rethinking accepted wisdom about where fish are hiding, and the means by which trout can be persuaded to take a fly. This is not to say that Engle is some rogue species of fisherman dependent on esoteric methods, but rather, one who happily melds traditional technique with alternative presentation, and who is also comfortable considering those fishing intangibles—an instinctive feel or intuition that, once developed, can enable an angler to think more like a fish,

whether the water is clear or muddy or the level, running high or barely a trickle.

Engle tempts the angler to consider a wide range of alternate nymphing variations like purposely adding a non-drag-free lift at the end of a dead drift to provoke a strike and using the rod to direct drifts around in-stream rocks. Engle also illustrates how to use strike indicators to best advantage and how to maximize strike detection.

Depending on prevailing conditions, he suggests other options such as: pulling a dry fly underwater on purpose; skating abstract spider patterns; utilizing high-sticking, and 'dapping' techniques. His fishing wisdom also extends to the fly itself. For example, Engle has consistently pulled trout from highly technical, small-fly waters using a Zonker streamer pattern, and in the chapter titled Oddities, he advocates tying various patterns that incorporate a preponderance of blue-colored thread, dubbing and ribbing, which seem to trigger takes especially in winter.

This is a lively volume packed with color photos, fly patterns, casting technique illustrations, and engaging first-person accounts of success using non-traditional methods, or methods some anglers may have merely forgotten. My personal favorite is his account of meadow stream mousing under a full moon. Another winner from Stackpole!



Congratulations to Daniel Rorrer, who became the first turkey hunter in NWTF history to register a turkey in all lower 48 states and Alaska this past May!



Photo courtesy of L.L. Bean

Congratulations to Douglas Dear (L), who recently won the prestigious L. L. Bean Outdoor Heroes Award for his volunteer work with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. Dear has been actively involved in the organization since 2007 and chairs its board of trustees. In addition to volunteering time and fundraising expertise, Dear donates the use of his farm in Syria with access to one mile of the bucolic Rose River—which he stocks for PHWFF events. Also pictured above (R) is Ed Nicholson of PHWFF. Through all-volunteer efforts, the organization promotes the physical and spiritual healing of wounded and disabled military veterans.

Christmas

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This pure albino doe and friend run together frequently in the Franklin area. Photo courtesy of professional photographer Don Bridgers.

IMAGE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations go to Meaghan Stevens, of Sterling, for her wonderful photograph of a barred owl hunkered down during a light snowfall. Meaghan used a Canon EOS Digital Rebel SXi SLR camera, ISO 200, 1/250th, f/5.6 to capture this beautiful and tranquil image. Great shot Meaghan!

You are invited to submit one to five of your best photographs to "Image of the Month," Virginia Wildlife Magazine, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. Send original slides, super high-quality prints, or high-res jpeg, tiff, or raw files on a disk and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or other shipping method for return. Also, please include any pertinent information regarding how and where you captured the image and what camera and settings you used, along with your phone number. We look forward to seeing and sharing your work with our readers.



I had just put a couple of small, bacon-wrapped stuffed pheasant breasts in the Hobart. As I started out to the cellar to select a nice Bordeaux or Rioja, I looked out the window of my dog house and saw the alpha female headed for the car, struggling with two heavy suitcases. Ol' Jones was "helping" her pack the car by carrying the keys. Jones is not one to travel lightly. He requires an extra suitcase for what he calls "just in case" clothes—as in, just in case someone invites him to quail hunt on their private shooting estate, or just in case someone invites him to field-test a new Beretta, Fausti, or Baserri shotgun at their private gun club. It is highly unlikely any of this will ever happen, but as Jones says, if you are going to dream—dream *big*, just in case.

Now no one loves a road trip more than me and when I see the dog crate going into the back of the SUV, I hustle on over to find out where we are going. "South Carolina," says Ol' Jones before I can ask, "...land of warmer climes, low country seafood, palmetto trees, quail plantations, and Old South culture."

Also the land of fire ants, copperheads, cottonmouths, and alligators, I think to myself.

It seems that the alpha female required a change in latitude to improve a change in her attitude, as the song goes, and Ol' Jones negotiated a trip to Charleston that just happened to coincide with the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition held every year in that fair city. Some of the best wildlife artists, sculptors, and carvers in the world come to this event. Jones's philosophy is this: If you find you have to be walking around all day looking at stuff, you might as well look at stuff you like to look at.

As the alpha female went back to the house for more provisions, Ol' Jones bent down and whispered in my ear. "On the way back through South Carolina, we are

taking a detour through Camden, where the *Boykin Spaniel* breed is supposed to have originated." The bride had seen the breed at the Southern Side-by-Side recently and had fallen in love with that little dog. Jones thought it might encourage her to hunt with us more if she had a pup of her own.

At first, the thought of having to share a tummy rub from the alpha female was not at all appealing, but the more I thought about it, the more the idea made sense. I never met an unhappy Boykin or one that was not enthused about hunting. Having a young, energetic South Carolina "swamp poodle" around to chase down cripples, squeeze through briars, or retrieve ducks in frigid pond water would certainly take a little of the load off me. Besides, a new pup translates to new training treats and the alpha female is a pushover for puppy eyes. So when baby Boykin gets a treat, naturally the alpha female is going to toss one my direction too.

It seems Ol' Jones had done a little homework on Boykins (see page 20). The word he had gotten from Jane Sexton of the Boykin Spaniel Society is that if you are looking for a small, loving, loyal, and energetic breed that requires (like most humans) daily exercise, a Boykin might just be the dog for you. Jane also suggested going to the website www.boykinspaniel.org and following their recommendations closely. As for hunting, Jane says, "I think it would be very difficult to find a Boykin Spaniel that would not be interested in hunting, no matter where it came from."

In thinking about it a bit more, if Mr. and Mrs. Ol' Jones have decided we need a determined little hunter, I think we ought to bring back two. I have already picked out their names—in keeping with their South Carolina heritage: *Shrimp* and *Grits*!

Keep a leg up,
Luke



"That is one lazy dog."

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Protecting Your Rights: Copyright and the Photographer

Did you know that the second you press the shutter of a camera you are creating a copyrighted work? But what does that mean exactly? In her insightful book, *Photographer's Legal Guide*, Carolyn E. Wright, Esq. states, "Copyright is a legal form of protection granted by the United States Constitution for original works that include literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and photographic works. Copyright gives the author or creator the exclusive 'right' to 'copy' the original work. ... Copyrights do not extend to ideas, methods, procedures, concepts, principles, short names, titles, slogans, and works that have not been transformed into a tangible form, such as a print or electronic file."

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An agreement can be made orally, but it is always best to get *everything* in writing. You never know when the person you made the agreement with might become incapacitated or simply can't remember what was said. A contract stating the terms of use, time limitations, and reimbursement does not have to be written by a lawyer to be legal and binding but it does need signatures from both parties.

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Many photographers use watermarks, as seen here, to help protect their online images from illegal usage. Companies like Digimarc can help you embed and track images anywhere on the web.

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Dining In

by Ken and Maria Perrotte

Venison Barbeque Baked Beans



Favor, flexibility, and fiber are among the key attributes of this simple one-pot meal. Loaded with meat and fast to make since it employs canned beans, it is easily transported to parties or slapped together for a deer camp table.

Serve it in a bread bowl for added panache. If you feel a need for some leafy greens on the side, add a salad, but think twice before doing something like a three-bean salad.

We originally enjoyed a variation of this dish at a neighbor's party, and our family and friends like the venison and sausage tweaks we have added. You can adjust the taste by including your own favorite smoked and ground meats to this recipe, or stretch it by adding up to another pound of meats. It wouldn't affect the flavor significantly.

Did we mention it's heavy on the beans?

Ingredients

1 pound ground venison
1 pound thick sliced bacon
½ pound venison sausage (breakfast or smoked works well)
1½ cups chopped onion

¼ cup sugar
⅓ cup packed brown sugar
3 tablespoons molasses
¼ cup ketchup
½ cup barbeque sauce
1 tablespoon Dijon or spicy mustard
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon black pepper
Salt to taste
2 cans, 16 ounce pork and beans
1 can, 15 ounce black beans, drained
1 can, 15 ounce butter or lima beans, drained
1 can, 15 ounce kidney beans, drained

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Cook the bacon in a skillet. Crumble or break into small chunks and set aside. Drain off the grease. In the same skillet, brown the ground meat and sausage. Set the meat aside and drain off the fat. Chop the onions and cook in the same skillet until soft. Combine half of the bacon, the meat and onions, and all the seasonings, spices, and liquids in a large bowl. Mix in the beans. Stir well; taste and adjust the seasonings if desired. Pour into a greased baking or casserole dish, top with the rest of the crumbled bacon, and cook for about an hour until the edges start to bubble slightly. If the top starts to brown or dry out, stir the mixture and turn the heat down to 325°.

This can easily be mixed ahead of time and baked later as needed. Serves 10 as a main dish and 15 or more as a side dish.

You can simply ladle this into a bowl, but try it in a bread bowl. Buy or make a few small, round loaves of crusty bread. Hollow them out and ladle in the hot beans and venison. If you can only find a large, round loaf, hollow it out and then fill it before serving the table. Then, cut it into quarters, making an X across the center. You won't get the bowl effect for the entire meal but it makes for an interesting presentation. The bread also sops up liquids and makes for a nice accompaniment.



VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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The deadline for submitting photographs for the 2011 Virginia Wildlife Photography Contest is November 2, 2011.

Winning photographs will appear in the special March 2012 issue of the magazine. For more information about the contest and to view last year's edition online, visit the Department's website at: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/photocontest>.



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